

CLAIMS:

1. A hybrid stethoscope comprising:
 - A. a bell placeable by a user on a body site overlying an internal region to receive sounds emanating therefrom;
 - 5 B. a tubular line acoustically coupling the bell to earphones insertable in ears of the user to cause the user to hear said sounds; and
 - C. a visual display module mounted on the bell and responsive to sounds received thereby and adapted to exhibit an analog waveform of the sounds whereby the user effectively sees as well as hears the sounds.
- 10 2. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 1 in which the module is a battery-powered self-sufficient unit.
3. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 1 in which the module is mounted on a rear surface of the bell.
4. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 2 in which said module includes a 15 liquid crystal display device to exhibit said waveform.
5. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 4 in which the module includes a microphone which intercepts sounds received by the bell to produce an audio signal that is applied to the liquid crystal display device.
6. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 5 in which the tubular line 20 functions as a low-pass filter to filter out high-frequency components of the sounds.
7. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 6 in which the microphone of the module is sensitive to said high-frequency components which are included in said audio signal.
- 25 8. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 1 in which the bell is double headed, opposing heads of the bells being joined at a junction to which said module is laterally attached.
9. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 1 in which said module includes a transmitter to convey said audio signal to an external monitor adapted to exhibit

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said waveform and to manipulate said waveform to effect measurements which aid in an analysis thereof.

10. The stethoscope as set forth in Claim 9 in which said transmitter is a microwave transmitter and said monitor is provided with a microwave receiver to receive and demodulate the transmission to derive the audio signal therefrom.

11. An intercommunication system comprising a plurality of hybrid stethoscopes as set forth in Claim 1 provided with means intercoupling the visual display modules whereby the waveform produced by any module in the system is exhibited in other modules thereof.

10 12. A system as set forth in Claim 11 in which each module includes a microwave transmitter to transmit the waveform to the other modules, and a receiver to receive the transmitted waveform.

13. A system for conducting a stethoscopic examination using a hybrid stethoscope as set forth in Claim 5 in which the audio signal yielded by the 15 microphone in the module is transmitted to a remote station at which it is recorded.

14. A system as set forth in Claim 13 in which the body site at which the bell is placed is the chest of the patient, and the resultant audio signals are breathing sounds.

20 15. A system as set forth in Claim 13 in which the system is selectively operable in several modes, each of which depends on the body site on which the bell is placed, said module including means to preface the signal yielded by the microphone in a selected mode with a code signal identifying the mode.